



January 13, 2022

Water Quality Control Commission
1190 Saint Francis Drive
Suite # South 2102
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505
Pamela.Jones@state.nm.us

Re: WQCC 21-51(R) - Upper Pecos Watershed Outstanding National Resource Water Designation

Dear Commissioners,

New Mexico Wilderness Alliance (New Mexico Wild) supports the petition, submitted by San Miguel County, Village of Pecos, New Mexico Acequia Association, Molino de la Isla Organics, and Upper Pecos Watershed Association, to protect the Upper Pecos Watershed, from Dalton Canyon upstream to the Wilderness Boundary, as Outstanding National Resource Waters.

New Mexico Wild is committed to the protection of New Mexico's wildlands, waters, and wildlife. Clean water is an absolute imperative to our mission, and to the continued enjoyment of the spaces we care about. Additionally, New Mexico Wild is committed to the preservation of cultural and sacred sites, artifacts, and landscapes that are important to our pueblos and tribes. Water is life, and these ONRW designations are an important step in the right direction.

The cold and clean waters of the Upper Pecos watershed including the nominated 16 named streams and the 109 miles of ephemeral tributaries that feed these systems are home to the many trout species, special status plant species, and other important species for the economic and ecological health of the state. Many of the streams serve as some of the last remaining refuges for New Mexico's native Rio Grande cutthroat trout. In addition the 180 miles of streams included in this nomination provide a myriad of recreational opportunities including hiking, hunting, camping, and fishing.

The Upper Pecos watershed is among NM's best cold-water fisheries. Indeed, a stretch of the nominated area includes state "Special Trout Waters." The NM Department of Game and Fish angler data ranges from 83,000-140,000 angler days in San Miguel County, many of which are on the Pecos river.

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The communities downstream from the nominated area depend on the clean and clear flowing water of the Pecos to feed their acequias and water their livestock. Protecting the headwaters of the Pecos will benefit New Mexico immensely by ensuring that these downstream users will continue to receive clean water into the future.

I urge you designated the entire 180 miles of nominated waters as ONRWs.

Sincerely,

Logan Glasenapp
Staff Attorney
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